



July 28, 2000

VETERANS' PROGRAM LETTER NO. 10-00

TO: REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS AND DIRECTORS FOR  
VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
STATE EMPLOYMENT SECURITY AGENCY ADMINISTRATORS  
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
ADMINISTRATION

FROM:   
ESPIRIDION (AL) BORREGO

SUBJECT: DRAFT VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE  
(VETS) STRATEGIC PLAN, FISCAL YEARS 2000-2005

I. **PURPOSE:** To seek comments on the draft VETS Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2000-2005, dated July 18, 2000.

II. **REFERENCES AND RESCISSIONS:** Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993; this draft VETS Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2000-2005 dated July 18, 2000, replaces the draft of the VETS Strategic Plan, dated January 10, 2000 that has been on the VETS web site (see Section III below).

III. **DISTRIBUTION:** A copy of the draft VETS Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2000-2005, may be obtained from the VETS home page, at

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/vets>

A hard copy of the draft VETS Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2000-2005 may be obtained by contacting the Director for Veterans' Employment and Training (DVET) in your State.

IV. **BACKGROUND:** The draft VETS Strategic Plan, Fiscal Year 2000-2005, dated July 18, 2000, represents a culmination of input from VETS' stakeholders. Several earlier versions of a draft VETS Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2000-2005 have been shared informally with State Employment Security Agency Administrators, Veterans' Service Organizations, congressional

staff and other interested parties since September, 1999, and comments were sought and obtained. All comments were carefully reviewed and considered.

VETS also acknowledges the valuable technical guidance on strategic plan format and structure provided by the Federal Data Corporation (FDC) under contract to the Department's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management. This technical guidance was sought and obtained pursuant to the report language on the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 by the Committee on Governmental Affairs, United States Senate. The report language made clear that the expertise of non-Federal parties, such as contractors, could be used in the preparation of strategic plans. VETS determined that it had a lack of in-house expertise in appropriate formatting and structure and availed itself of the Department's contractor. FDC also provided a valuable independent assessment of VETS' data capacity to adequately measure the performance goals contained in the Strategic Plan, and the relative costs associated with such measurement.

The Department of Labor has mandated that all agency strategic plans for the period FY 2000-2005 be finalized and published by September 30, 2000, after a review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). To allow adequate time for VETS consideration and for the OMB review, all stakeholder comments must be received in early August, 2000.

V. ACTIONS REQUIRED:

A. Comments on the July 18, 2000 draft VETS Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2000-2005, are encouraged. All comments should be received by August 9, 2000. Comments may be sent electronically to Mr. Ron Bachman at: [bachman-ronald@dol.gov](mailto:bachman-ronald@dol.gov)

Hard-copy comments may be mailed to Mr. Bachman at:

Mr. Ronald Bachman  
Regional Administrator  
Veterans' Employment and Training Service  
230 South Dearborn Room 164  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

B. DVETs will ensure that the State has a copy of the July 18, 2000 draft VETS Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2000-2005, by calling the State to determine if they have been able to print a copy from VETS home page. If the State is unable to print a copy, the DVET should print and hand carry a copy to the appropriate State official.

VI. INQUIRIES: Questions regarding this Veterans' Program Letter or the July 18, 2000 draft VETS Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2000-2005, should be directed to Mr. Ron Bachman at 312-353-0970.

VII. EXPIRATION DATE: September 30, 2000.

# **VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE (VETS)**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

**FISCAL YEARS 2000-2005**

**UPDATE 7/18/00**  
Consultation Draft

# U.S. Department of Labor

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## SECTION 1. Introduction

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**MISSION**            **The mission of the Veterans Employment and Training Service is to promote the economic security of America’s veterans by minimizing unemployment and underemployment among veterans with service connected disabilities and among other targeted veterans groups, and by providing the maximum of employment and training opportunities to all veterans.**

This unique mission of VETS is derived under the mandate of Congress as reflected in Title 38 , U.S.C., Chapters 41 through 43; the Workforce Investment Act; the Veterans Employment and Opportunities Act; and other related provisions. In particular, it reflects the statutory purpose underlying the creation of VETS, as stated as follows in section 4102 of Chapter 41:

*The Congress declares as its intent and purpose that there shall be an effective (1) job and job training counseling service program, (2) employment placement service program, and (3) job training placement service program for eligible veterans and eligible persons<sup>3</sup> and that, to this end policies and regulations shall be promulgated and administered by an Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans’ Employment and Training, established by section 4102A of this title, through a Veterans’ Employment and Training Service within the Department of Labor, so as to*

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<sup>3</sup> As defined by section 4101 of Title 38, “eligible person” means a) the spouse of any person who died of a service-connected disability, and b) the spouse of any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for assistance, is listed...in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than ninety days: (I) missing in action, (ii) captured in line of duty by a hostile force, or (iii) forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power, or c) the spouse of any person who has a total disability permanent in nature resulting from a service-connected disability or the spouse of a veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence.

*provide such veterans and persons the maximum of employment and training opportunities, with priorities given to the needs of disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era through existing programs, coordination and merger of programs and implementation of new programs.*

This statutory mandate has been subsequently modified by other provisions of law that broadened the target group of veterans to be given priority of service, so as to include certain other categories of veterans. VETS mandate, however, remains fundamentally as stated in the above requirement, and therefore mirrors the broader focus of the entire Department of Labor in enhancing employment opportunities and promoting economic security.

## **VISION**

**The vision of VETS is that by focusing at all times on our customers' needs, we will provide veterans and others the high quality and timely services they require in order to succeed in the changing labor exchange environment.**

Fulfilling this vision means that, faced with the growing long-term challenges of new service delivery systems, evolving labor markets, and changing technologies, VETS will find innovative ways to maximize the effectiveness of its efforts. This will be accomplished by continually seeking new and effective means to help veterans and other eligible persons compete successfully for better paying career jobs--helping them get on a track that can provide better income stability and growth potential in future years even if jobs, systems, markets, and technologies change significantly.

## **STRUCTURE**

VETS is headed by an Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) and a Deputy Assistant Secretary (DASVET). The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (OASVET) represents the headquarters component of the VETS organization, consisting of two offices that support VETS' ongoing activities nationwide. The Office of Operations and Programs manages the activities of VETS' field

staff and interacts with other stakeholders in delivering the full range of Agency services, and the Office of Agency Management and Budget is responsible for management support activities and budget formulation and execution. The OASVET also maintains a specialized strategic planning, marketing, and legislative analysis section in VETS' headquarters, engaged in planning, analysis, marketing and legislative interactions for the entire Agency.

VETS has the responsibility to award and monitor employment and training grants (primarily those staffing grants to the States which fund the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) under Title 38, U.S.C., Chapters 41 and 42). The DVOP specialists provide intensive employability and job development services to help veterans secure permanent employment, particularly veterans with service-connected disabilities and other disadvantaged veterans. LVER staff provide job development, placement, and supportive services directly to veterans and act as functional supervisors of the services provided veterans by other local office staff to ensure compliance with the performance standards for services to veterans.

VETS also provides direct investigative and enforcement services to protect employment rights and benefits for veterans, reservists, National Guard members, and other eligible persons (primarily under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) at Title 38, U.S.C., Chapter 43, and the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 (VEOA)).

VETS carries out its responsibilities through a nationwide network of field staff under the direction of the ASVET. Key field staff positions (all of which are delineated in Title 38, U.S.C.) include:

Regional Administrators for Veterans' Employment and Training (RAVETs), who are assigned to manage VETS' operations within each of the ten regions of the DOL;

Directors for Veterans' Employment and Training (DVETs) in each State who serve as the link between VETS and the State employment service systems, and ensure that States carry out their obligations to provide services to

veterans under various federally funded programs, including the services provided under the DVOP and LVER grants;

Assistant Directors for Veterans Employment and Training (ADVETs), one or more of which can be assigned in a State based on a veteran population formula defined in Title 38 U.S.C. (one ADVET for every 250,000 veterans and eligible persons residing in each State); and

Veterans' Program Assistants (VPAs), one of which is assigned in each State as support for the DVET.

VETS' field staff are cross-trained in all agency responsibilities to better carry out all the grant administration and direct services for which the agency is responsible. This field staff also includes two Regional Lead Centers (RLCs) staffed by program specialists under the supervision of a RAVET. Each RLC is responsible for nationwide data services and other programmatic activities--one in VETS' Chicago Regional Office (for the DVOP/LVER programs), and another in VETS' Atlanta Regional Office (for the USERRA program).

In its leadership role in enhancing employment opportunities and promoting job security for veterans, VETS also maintains effective service delivery networks involving other agencies and organizations in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. It interacts with a wide range of employment and training providers, including grantees, contractors, and staff in other Federal departments and agencies (such as DOD, HUD, DVA, DOJ, OPM and the Office of Special Counsel), and with various stakeholders.

## **BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

The Congress considers employment services for veterans to be a national responsibility. National policy is detailed in title 38 of the U.S. Code, establishing that veterans should receive employment and training opportunities. Legislation passed in 1980 established the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) with its own Assistant Secretary within the Department of Labor. The Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary of

Labor on all policies and procedures affecting veterans and sets counseling, training, and placement policies and goals for veterans served through the public employment service and other employment and training programs. Under VETS, employment services are mainly provided through staffing grants by DVOP and LVER specialists in each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

For much of VETS' over sixty year history it has been a veteran's advocate whose primary approach to helping its customers has been compliance-oriented, e.g., enforcing job referral control mechanisms imposed on the State Employment Service Agencies (SESAs), and investigating reemployment rights violation complaints against employers. Only in the last twenty some years has VETS become actively engaged in developing and administering training programs through grants to States and nonprofit organizations to serve the employment needs of veterans. As a result of administering training programs, VETS has had to interact more closely with the employer community and has developed a deeper appreciation for the fact that employers, especially private sector employers, are also customers and investors.

## SECTION 2. The Changing Workforce and Workplace

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The veteran civilian labor force totals more than 15 million in 1998, or 12% of the total civilian labor force. Among all veterans, approximately 12% (close to 2 million) have registered annually in recent years with State employment service offices, seeking employment and training assistance and services. Helping these veterans is a Federal responsibility, which cannot be devolved to States.

Although the veterans' unemployment rate overall is lower than the overall rate for non-veterans (3.2% for veterans, compared with 4.0% for non-veterans using Calendar Year 1998 Annual Averages from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)), certain groups among veterans have recently shown disproportionately higher unemployment rates than these overall populations' rates.

This fact, along with other contributing characteristics reflecting a variety of needs among these groups, prompted VETS to place these veterans' groups among those targeted as most in need of employment and training services. The Agency anticipates that even if economic forces might occur sporadically or cyclically which could preclude consistent reductions in these groups' unemployment rates, providing targeted employment and training services should nonetheless help these veterans, and might often be associated with the desired reductions in their unemployment rates as well. The following illustrates these targeted groups' recent unemployment rates, showing the disproportions compared to the 3.2% veterans and/or 4.0% non-veterans benchmarks from 1998:

	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>Percent Unemployed</u>	
<i>Special Disabled Veterans</i>	1997	5.7%	
<i>Disabled Veterans</i>	“	4.0%	
<i>Female Veterans</i>	1998	5.1%	
<i>Black Veterans</i>	“	4.8%	
<i>Hispanic Veterans</i>	“	3.4%	/
<i>Native American Veterans</i>	“	4.5%	/
<i>Asian American Veterans</i>	“	6.3%	/
			/
<i>Veterans 20-24 yrs</i>	1998	9.2%	/

**1998 BENCHMARKS:**  
**3.2% Veterans Unemployed**  
**4.0% Non-Veterans Unemployed**

The environment is a fluid, fast changing one, with challenges for VETS from the enactment of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The key challenges in delivering veteran-focused services in this new environment include identification of alternative means of providing veterans with employment and training opportunities; targeting veterans' groups and subgroups with high unemployment rates, greater need, and employment barriers; and teaching veterans how to use the new electronic tools to help themselves, while concentrating resources based on need. Another key challenge is to take advantage of employers' cognizance of the value of veterans, particularly in a digital economy, and to facilitate efforts by employers to get veterans to meet their labor needs, when and where such labor needs exist. This implies addressing veterans' skill gaps when and where they exist. Also, it implies supplementing their knowledge, skills, and abilities with information technology skills to make the veteran more valuable within the digital economy.

VETS' assessment of the environment is based on the following assumptions that:

Unemployment is assumed to remain low, but slowly increasing over the planning period, with premium wages paid to those workers with valued skills and work habits. Most veterans meet these criteria, and overall, veterans enjoy an unemployment rate that is below the national average. For some veteran groups, however, unemployment rates are above the national average. Young, minority veterans, and veterans receiving welfare are among such groups. For others, frictional unemployment is a problem: veterans whose skills are no longer in demand in the labor market and upon losing their jobs will have to choose and become marketable in a new occupation. Many times these are veterans who would otherwise be in their most productive years and at ages when they would be well established in their occupation. However, they must now face the need to acquire new knowledge, skills and abilities. Thus, there is a loss of income involved, as they start a career in a new occupation, and must compete with younger veterans with lesser income needs. There is also transitional unemployment, suffered by veterans that have been dislocated due to changes in a local economy, but there is demand for their talents elsewhere, especially if those skills are upgraded or otherwise enhanced.

The labor exchange environment under WIA will continue to change at a fast pace. The passage of the WIA in 1998, with implementation on July 1, 2000 puts a framework and focus on much of the change. The WIA gives great flexibility to States in designing workforce development systems that are uniquely suited to meet the needs in each locality. One-Stop service centers, which a number of States have been experimenting with for years, will become a reality with WIA implementation. One-Stops will increasingly feature an array of self-help tools for those individuals who are job ready, or need a limited amount of job assistance services from One Stop service providers. Training funds will remain at a premium, with priority going to help welfare to work clients and other low income individuals.

Interagency relations with the DOD and DVA will remain strong. With these agencies support, VETS will continue to operate the TAP for separating service members. As the DOD places more emphasis and resources on retention and less on services to transitioning servicemembers, VETS can expect to be called upon to make up the resource difference. This may mean more DVOP and LVER staff, and/or VETS federal staff, may be called upon to provide a larger share of transition services. The Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and DVA have been provided substantially more funding in recent years to provide additional transitional housing and other support to veterans who are homeless. More and more of these veterans have become ready to reenter the job market, which has put pressure on VETS' small homeless veterans' program to provide more effective job finding assistance. VETS will continue to coordinate closely with the DVA to offer job finding assistance to disabled veteran graduates of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program.

Veterans' Preference violations among Federal departments and agencies are expected to rise -- investigations became the responsibility of VETS under VEOA in 1998 P.L. 105-339. VETS is working with our solicitors, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Office of Special Counsel (OSC), and the Merit Systems' Protection Board (MSPB) to develop investigative procedures and referral processes. A training course for VETS investigative field staff was developed in conjunction with the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) and training started in FY 1999 and will continue in FY 2000. With these partners VETS will provide uniform redress procedures in hiring and reductions-in-force (RIFs) to preference eligible veterans and other preference eligible persons. Complaints concerning alleged violations is anticipated with increasing demand for limited federal jobs. VETS will develop strategies that can be implemented should this expected increase in complaints occur.

## SECTION 3.

### VETS Goal Linkages to Mission and DOL Goals

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#### INTRODUCTION

VETS' key strategic plan elements are intended both to guide fulfillment of the Agency's own mission, and to serve as the primary means for ensuring that VETS' programmatic activities link to and support achievement of the Department's broader goals. This section illustrates how VETS strategic and outcome goals facilitate both sets of linkages.

#### DOL STRATEGIC AND OUTCOME GOALS

##### DOL Strategic Goal 1

A Prepared Workforce -- Enhance opportunities for America's workforce

Outcome Goals:

- 1.1 Increase employment, earnings, and assistance
- 1.2 Increase the number of youth making a successful transition to work
- 1.3 Provide information and analysis on the U.S. economy

##### DOL Strategic Goal 2

A Secure Workforce -- Promote the economic security of workers and families

Outcome Goals:

- 2.1 Increase compliance with worker protection laws
- 2.2 Protect worker benefits
- 2.3 Increase employment and earnings for retrained workers

##### DOL Strategic Goal 3

Quality Workplaces -- Foster quality workplaces that are safe, healthy, and fair

Outcome Goals:

- 3.1 Reduce workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities
- 3.2 Foster equal opportunity workplaces
- 3.3 Increase availability and effectiveness of programs that support a greater balance between work and family
- 3.4 Reduce exploitation of child labor and address core international labor standards issues

#### LINKAGES

**VETS Mission:** To promote the economic security of America's veterans by minimizing unemployment and underemployment among veterans with

service connected disabilities and among other targeted veterans groups, and by providing the maximum of employment and training opportunities to all veterans.

**Strategic Goal 1.** Provide effective DOL employment and training services so as to minimize unemployment and underemployment among disabled veterans.

Supports DOL Outcome Goal 1.1: Increase employment, earnings, and assistance.

Outcome Goal 1.1. Achieve an entered employment rate among disabled veterans registered for public labor exchange services significantly greater than that for non-veterans registered for public labor exchange core services.

Outcome Goal 1.2. Achieve a significant entered employment rate among disabled veterans registered for public labor exchange services.

Outcome Goal 1.3. Provide responsive employment and training services to disabled veterans such that they are satisfied with the assistance received.

**Strategic Goal 2.** Promote maximum employment opportunities for all veterans, with special attention given to meeting the needs of targeted groups, which includes veterans who have significant barriers to employment, veterans who served on active duty in the armed forces during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized, and recently separated veterans.

Supports DOL Outcome Goal 1.1: Increase employment, earnings, and assistance.

Outcome Goal 2.1. Veterans seeking employment will have the benefit of an effective range of streamlined service-delivery mechanisms, public information activities, and self-service opportunities.

Outcome Goal 2.2. A significant number of all eligible veterans, as well as of targeted group veterans, requesting public labor exchange core services will receive successful and satisfactory job placement assistance.

Outcome Goal 2.3. A significant number of veterans entering employment as a result of receiving public labor exchange core services will retain unsubsidized jobs for a meaningful period of time.

Outcome Goal 2.4. A significant number of the veterans who served in a military occupation with a civilian counterpart occupation that requires a credential will receive certification or licensing for civilian employment, or will receive information about requirements for such certification and licensing and an assessment of the gaps in their required training and experience.

Outcome Goal 2.5. A significant number of non-job ready veterans provided assistance (including members of the military services) will receive employability development services (including case management) and other specific assistance that enhances their civilian employment prospects significantly.

Outcome Goal 2.6. Assist veterans, reservists and National Guard members to understand and apply their rights under Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Veterans' Preference (VP), resolving complaint cases expeditiously while maintaining quality case handling procedures.

Supports DOL Outcome Goal 2.1: Increase compliance with worker protection laws.

## **SECTION 4.**

### **VETS Goals, Strategies & External Factors**

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**STRATEGIC GOAL 1. Provide effective DOL employment and training services so as to minimize unemployment and underemployment among disabled veterans.**

**General Strategy.** The general approach under Strategic Goal 1 is to focus on addressing the needs of disabled veterans. This group of veterans is given this priority because the unique nature of their situation requires specific, distinct attention in order to achieve satisfactory results. Key elements in VETS strategy to do so include the following:

**Improve staff training.** In order to meet the ongoing need for training due to the relatively high turnover rates by DVOP and LVER staff, VETS will increase the quality and amount of training provided annually to the staff by the National Veterans' Training Institute (depending upon resource availability).

**Define the intended results.** In order to facilitate the development of more specific strategies and multi-year performance targets, various outcome goals are indicated that define the types of results VETS intends to achieve under Strategic Goal 1. Outcome Goal 1.1 is aimed at achieving a satisfactory entered employment rate among registered disabled veterans. Outcome Goal 1.3 emphasizes the need for customer satisfaction by the disabled veterans served.

**Continue and expand the partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs.** VETS has worked productively with the DVA in the past to coordinate programs and efforts on behalf of veterans, particularly disabled veterans. VETS will continue and expand this effort in the future by identifying areas where additional coordination would be helpful in maximizing employment and training efforts for disabled veterans.

**Key External Factors.** The following external factors may occur that could adversely affect performance under Strategic Goal 1:

**WIA and One-Stop implications.** The Workforce Development system, as well as its components-labor exchange, unemployment, training and skills development systems-is in a state of flux and it is impossible to predict the exact path the changes will take. VETS' will continue to be an active player at both the State level (through DVETS) and at the national level, working with ETA and other stakeholders in successful WIA implementation. Continuing changes at the state level of the employment delivery system may make it difficult for VETS to effectively predict or plan for specific outcomes for veterans. Although flexibility will be built into the specific performance measures that are negotiated with each State, VETS will also ensure that basic floor levels for services also apply. (NOTE: this possibility also affects VETS Strategic Goal 2.)

**Economic and environmental conditions.** Any unexpected increase in the number of individuals discharged annually from the armed forces may impact in the short term on VETS ability to serve all veterans. If job ready veterans need more hands-on help than believed, the intended concentration of VETS funded resources on the identified target groups will not

occur. Obviously, a downturn in the economy would also diminish the supply of new job opportunities needed for our veteran customers; this could result in more unemployment among targeted veteran groups including homeless veterans and increase the number of veterans seeking assistance. Conversely, an upturn in the economy could decrease the total number of veterans registering with SESAs and may impact on VETS ability to meet overall entered employment goals. However, in such an instance, VETS would be able to devote even more resources to targeted veterans and case management which should result in higher goal achievement in those areas. (NOTE: this possibility also affects VETS Strategic Goal 2.)

**Better data needed from the VA's VR&E on Chapter 31 veterans.** The VR&E has been unable to provide concrete figures in the past on the numbers of VR&E participants that are in need of employment service from VETS funded staff. Because much of the VR&E is decentralized, the information provided to VETS funded staff on VR&E participants in the "pipeline" is better in some areas than others. VETS has conducted quarterly meetings with the VR&E and made recommendations on areas where improvements could assist the job prospects of VR&E participants. VETS will continue this productive dialogue in hopes that it will foster improvements in the VR&E's referral and tracking of participants for placement and other services from VETS funded staff.

**Outcome Goals.** The following outcome goals define the types of results VETS intends to achieve under Strategic Goal 1:

**Outcome Goal 1.1.** Achieve an entered employment rate among disabled veterans registered for public labor exchange services significantly greater than that for non-veterans registered for public labor exchange core services.

**Outcome Goal 1.2.** Achieve a significant entered employment rate among disabled veterans registered for public labor exchange services.

**Outcome Goal 1.3.** Provide responsive employment and training services to disabled veterans such that they are satisfied with the assistance received.

**Outcome Goal 1.1. Achieve an entered employment rate among disabled veterans registered for public labor exchange services significantly greater than that for non-veterans registered for public labor exchange core services.**

**Outcome Strategy.** The strategy to achieve this outcome goal includes the following:

**Negotiate entered employment rates with the State public labor exchange system.**

This Outcome Goal is derived from Title 38, Chapter 41, which requires a report on a comparison of placement rates for disabled veterans and other groups of veterans with placement rates for non-veterans. However, the GAO and others have expressed concern that this goal is not truly outcome oriented. VETS, as part of the annual grant award process intends to negotiate individual entered employment rate outcome goals with each State. The

negotiated goals will reflect VETS national goals, with allowance for the economy and make-up of the workforce in each individual State.

**VR&E coordination.** Coordination with the DVA will be improved by training DVA, DVOP and LVER staff working on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment efforts, which should lead to VR&E referrals who can find jobs through the assistance of VETS' service delivery system. Frequent, ongoing communications will be established and maintained among the various stakeholders, both at the national and local levels. This coordination will be maximized by continuing the quarterly meetings between VETS and VR&E executive staff. At key times, Veterans' Service Organizations (especially those, such as the Disabled American Veterans and the Blinded Veterans Association, with significant disabled veteran membership) will be formally consulted with and their opinions sought on issues.

**Provide technical assistance.** Those States failing to meet the negotiated disabled veteran entered employment rate for VETS funded staff or Wagner-Peyser funded staff will be provided technical assistance with the specific intent that they meet the standard within two years.

**Strategic Performance Goals.** Achievement of this outcome goal will be measured through the following strategic performance goals:

**Strategic Performance Goal 1.1.A.** By 2005, increase the three-year rolling average of the entered employment rate for registered disabled veterans to 44% greater than that for non-veterans registered for public labor exchange services.

**Outcome Goal 1.2.** Achieve a significant entered employment rate among disabled veterans registered for public labor exchange services.

**Outcome Strategy.** The strategy to achieve this outcome goal includes the following:

VETS will continue to rely on priority of services.

VETS will negotiate individual entered employment rate goals with each State (with technical assistance to be provided by VETS in future years to those States failing to meet their goals for disabled veterans).

A training program will be developed and implemented for DVA, DVOP and LVER staff working on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, with the objective that these staff be better able to develop VR&E referrals who can find jobs through VETS assistance.

**Program Activities:**

Negotiate State entered employment rate goals.

Develop VR&E training program.

Train staff working on VR&E.

**Strategic Performance Goals.** Achievement of this outcome goal will be measured through the following strategic performance goals:

**Strategic Performance Goal 1.2.A.** By 2005, at least 36% of registered disabled veterans will enter employment each year through assistance provided by the public labor exchange system.

**Strategic Performance Goal 1.2.B.** By 2005, at least 38% of registered disabled veterans will enter employment each year through assistance provided by VETS funded staff.

**Strategic Performance Goal 1.2.C.** By 2005, at least 80% of veterans determined by the DVA VR&E to be job ready, and who are referred by the DVA and are registered for public labor exchange services, and are actively seeking employment, will enter employment each year through assistance provided by the public labor exchange system.

**Outcome Goal 1.3. Provide responsive employment and training services to disabled veterans such that they are satisfied with the assistance received.**

**Outcome Strategy.** The strategy to achieve this outcome goal includes the following:

**Establish earnings gain baseline.** VETS will explore the possibility of establishing a baseline for earnings gain by registered disabled veterans that enter employment. VETS believes that there will be a direct correlation between earnings gain and satisfaction with assistance received from VETS services.

**Coordinate with the Employment and Training Administration (ETA).** If earnings gain becomes a performance goal for the Department under WIA, ETA will have the lead for establishing the reporting system and methodology for measuring earnings gain for those that receive public labor exchange services. VETS will continue to coordinate with ETA to ensure that disabled veterans are included in the populations that would be measured if this becomes a Departmental performance goal.

VETS will also explore the possibility of working with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to use Social Security records to measure earnings gain. This would be done on a sample basis. Unfortunately, if this approach is used VETS would be unable to determine wage gains in some States, such as Michigan, where Social Security numbers are not obtained on those utilizing the WIA system.

**Increase Federal Contractor job listings with the public labor exchange system.**

Federal Contractors must take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment special disabled veterans. VETS will continue its efforts to make Federal Contractors aware of their responsibility to list jobs with the public labor exchange system and to hire special disabled veterans.

**Market the advantages of hiring disabled veterans to employers.** Because of their military service, disabled veterans have proven that they have discipline and work as part of a team.

VETS intends to develop a national marketing campaign in conjunction with the VA to market the advantages that hiring a disabled veterans can bring to an employer.

**Increase licensing and certification efforts for disabled veterans.** VETS' efforts in establishing and maintaining a national database on licensing and certification requirements that relate to the needs of service members transitioning to civilian employment have been exemplary. VETS has also established pilot projects with various States in specific occupational areas. VETS will actively promote recruitment of service members who have disabilities (and recently separated disabled veterans) for the pilot programs.

**Develop a systematic approach to identify those disabled veterans most at risk.**

This approach would borrow from the methodology of ETA's UI profiling initiative, which seeks to identify those most at risk in their ability to achieve gainful employment, and develop appropriate strategies to address obstacles. Like the general population, the disabled veteran population is made up of individuals with obstacles to employment that may vary widely. VETS intends to develop an assessment mechanism that would assist in identifying those disabled veterans most at risk of failure, and suggest strategies that would deal with obstacles to employment.

**Strategic Performance Goals.** Achievement of this outcome goal will be measured through the following strategic performance goals:

**Strategic Performance Goal 1.3.A.** By 2004, at least 70% of disabled veterans who have used public labor exchange services provided by VETS funded staff will rate that assistance as either "helpful" or "very helpful".

**Strategic Performance Goal 1.3.B.** By 2004, at least 62% of disabled veterans who have used public labor exchange services will rate that assistance as either "helpful" or "very helpful" (measures all public labor exchange staff in their ability to satisfy disabled veterans).

**Strategic Performance Goal 1.3.C.** By 2005, provide staff assisted case management services to at least 15% of all registered disabled veterans.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 2.** Promote maximum employment opportunities for all veterans and other eligible persons, with special attention given to meeting the needs of targeted groups, which includes veterans who have significant barriers to employment, veterans who served on active duty in the armed forces during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized, and recently separated veterans.

**General Strategy.** The general approach under Strategic Goal 2 is to address the needs of all veterans, while focusing most specifically on giving priority attention to the needs of certain targeted groups (other than disabled veterans, who are targeted under Strategic Goal 1). Key elements in VETS strategy to do so include the following:

**Improve performance measurement.** One important step in achieving this goal will be to improve the performance measurement tools and systems through coordination with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Bureau of the Census, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, DOL's OCR, and the State Employment Service Systems. Present measurement in all likelihood does not capture the full extent of the impact of VETS' efforts, thus hindering efforts to maximize the effective use of resources. This coordination initiative is intended to ensure that program performance related to Strategic, Outcome and Performance Goals is more accurately and completely documented.

**Compare to non-veterans' services.** Using the information compiled under the reporting requirements in Title 38, VETS will help identify veterans' service areas needing performance improvement. It will compare the performance of its service delivery systems in providing services to veterans with those systems' performance in serving non-veterans (Note: VETS is also considering establishing floor levels on veterans' services for every State. See Outcome Goal 2.2)

**DVOP/LVER electronic tools.** Sufficient resources will be provided to the States to allow DVOPs and LVERs access to the electronic employment and training system, particularly by upgrading personal computers for many, and for some, providing PC and Internet access for the first time.

**Improve staff training.** In order to meet veteran service providers' ongoing training needs (resulting in large part from the relatively high turnover rates consistently found among DVOP and LVER staff) VETS will increase the quality and amount of training provided annually to half of the veterans service provider staff by the National Veterans' Training Institute.

**Focus on customer satisfaction.** Another key effort will be the broader use of customer satisfaction surveys among the users of VETS' service delivery system. This expanded use will help identify service areas needing attention so that VETS can focus resources on those areas to improve service. Also, staff who deal with customers will be provided more and better training on customer relations and interactions, so as to make them more proficient in delivering service that is found satisfactory by the customers.

**Coordinate with ETA.** VETS will work with the Employment and Training Administration to identify common data elements and to establish reporting systems under the Workforce Investment Act.

**Improve grant processing and guidance to grantees.** Administrative adjustments will be made in the grant processing procedures and the "recapture process" for the DVOP/LVER program in order to promote more flexibility and higher efficiency in grant operations by the States. Guidance to SESAs, Veterans' Workforce Investment Programs, Homeless Veterans and other grantees will be improved by establishing new requirements on services to identified groups for SESAs and grantees.

**Define the intended results.** In order to facilitate the development of more specific strategies and multi-year performance targets, various outcome goals are indicated that define the types of results VETS intends to achieve under Strategic Goal 2. Outcome Goal 2.1 is aimed at

ensuring an effective transition to the new One-Stop environment in which employment services, including those for veterans, will be operating in the future, as mandated by the Workforce Investment Act. Outcome Goals 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 are derived directly from the core indicators of performance by which the States will be held accountable for their employment and training activities, as specified in Section 136 of the WIA. Customer satisfaction is measured as a performance goal within several of the outcome goals. Outcome Goal 2.5 relates to veterans who need even more intensive assistance through case management and mediated services, as well as service members desiring assistance in transitioning to civilian employment. Outcome Goal 2.6 aims to ensure protection for veterans and other eligible persons under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

**Key External Factors.** The following external factors may occur that could adversely affect performance under Strategic Goal 2:

**Conditions affecting VETS' enforcement programs.** A larger than expected increase in USERRA pension cases when Vietnam veterans' who returned to work for their pre-service employers reach 30 years of service would negatively impact on VETS' ability to resolve cases in shorter periods of time due to added workload. Increased attention to multi-employer plans may result in unexpected discovery of benefits' violations, thus creating a larger than expected caseload, resulting in an inability to shorten the time in which cases are resolved. The effectiveness of public information efforts should result in fewer violations of veterans' rights and impact positively on VETS' goal of decreasing case resolution time frames. Negative reactions by employers to efforts to explain program responsibilities could cause case load to increase or to continue at no less than present levels. The expert systems available via the Internet and other efforts designed to inform protected veterans and employers of rights and responsibilities should prove effective in reducing the numbers of complaints or claims with no merit so that adequate staff resources would then be readily available for processing valid claims. Refusal of employers to comply voluntarily with applicable laws and regulations despite public awareness campaign would have negative impact on VETS' goal to shorten resolution periods.

**TAP influences.** An increase in the percent of married service members from the historic figure of 69% would impact spousal participation in TAP. If the number of separating service members decreases from the expected 250,000 per year, VETS will be unable to increase the raw numbers of service members taking advantage of TAP. The continued support of DVA and DOD, through funding or personnel targeted for TAP, is essential to enable VETS to serve intended number of participants and improve services offered in TAP. Continuous participation by the DVA and DOD to improve the quality of TAP is also essential. Cooperation from TAP partners is needed to enable data to be collected to measure program results.

**Homeless veterans influences.** Employers' resistance to employ homeless veterans would

negatively impact on success of programs unless overcome. If VETS receives resources (to help homeless veterans get jobs) well below the resource levels provided to other agencies (i.e., HUD and DVA) for housing and feeding homeless veterans, there could be adverse impact on all efforts at helping the homeless--because lack of a job can quickly exhaust the resources needed to provide for continuing shelter and food. On the other hand, if DVA and HUD homeless programs are sustained they will have a positive effect upon VETS' ability to obtain employment for homeless veterans.

**Outcome Goals.** The following outcome goals define the types of results VETS intends to achieve under Strategic Goal 2:

**Outcome Goal 2.1.** Veterans seeking employment will have the benefit of an effective range of streamlined service-delivery mechanisms, public information activities, and self-service opportunities.

**Outcome Goal 2.2.** A significant number of all eligible veterans, as well as of targeted group veterans, requesting public labor exchange core services will receive successful and satisfactory job placement assistance.

**Outcome Goal 2.3.** A significant number of veterans entering employment as a result of receiving public labor exchange core services will retain unsubsidized jobs for a meaningful period of time.

**Outcome Goal 2.4.** A significant number of the veterans who served in a military occupation with a civilian counterpart occupation that requires a credential will receive certification or licensing for civilian employment, or will receive information about requirements for such certification and licensing and an assessment of the gaps in their required training and experience.

**Outcome Goal 2.5.** A significant number of non-job ready veterans provided assistance (including members of the military services), will receive employability development services (including case management) and other specific assistance that enhances their civilian employment prospects significantly.

**Outcome Goal 2.6.** Assist veterans, reservists, and National Guard members to understand and apply their rights under Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Veterans' Preference (VP), resolving complaint cases expeditiously while maintaining quality case handling procedures.

**Outcome Goal 2.1.** Veterans seeking employment will have the benefit of an effective range of streamlined service-delivery mechanisms, public information activities, and self-service opportunities.

**Outcome Strategy.** The strategy to achieve this outcome goal includes the following:

**Coordination at One-Stop Career Centers.** Agreements will be developed to coordinate VETS funded activities in each State, reflecting the new One-Stop service delivery approach. A major purpose will be to ensure that priority of service is maintained for veterans and that DVOP/LVERs and services to veterans provided through the public labor exchange system are successfully integrated into the One-Stop service delivery system.

**Coordinate with ETA on AJB.** Work with ETA to pilot and test methods and processes for ensuring that America's Job Bank meets the requirements of Title 38 for giving priority in referral to veterans.

**Establish national and state standards.** Nationwide standards of minimally acceptable performance levels for delivering employment services to veterans will be established and made applicable to all States. Each State will then negotiate its own specific target levels at or above that floor level, suitable to its own circumstances.

**Provide incentives and assistance.** In order to focus State Employment Security Agencies and other grantees' efforts toward better performance in delivering the various employment services to veterans, VETS will explore the possibility of developing an incentive, rewards, and sanctions process for grantees. This process will support desired actions while proscribing unacceptable actions, aimed at achieving the intended levels of service. Incentives and rewards will be established to benefit States that exceed their established performance levels. Greater incentives will be provided for successful delivery of services to targeted veterans. For those States failing to meet the agreed State adjusted levels of performance for the core indicators of performance and customer satisfaction, VETS will provide technical assistance in order that they are able to meet those standards within two years.

**Seek Federal contractor job listings.** In order to enhance the effectiveness of public information and self-service opportunities for veterans seeking employment, 55,000 Federal contractors will be advised of their obligation to list job openings with local employment service offices. VETS will then acquire that information from the Commerce Business Daily and the Federal Procurement Data System, and disseminate the Federal contractor and subcontractor job information to local employment offices.

**Improve program administration.** Develop a process which will improve the administration of the Federal contractor program by the public labor exchange system.

**Increase awareness and number of contractors listing jobs.** Increase Federal contractor, and Federal subcontractor awareness of their obligation to list employment opportunities with the public labor exchange system. This should have the intended affect of increasing the number of Federal contractors and subcontractors who list jobs with the public labor exchange system.

**Technical assistance.** Improve the quality of technical assistance provided to Federal contractors.

**Database management system.** Develop a data base management system which can be utilized by the public labor exchange system to identify and monitor the status of Federal contractors,

and capture VETS 100 reporting data.

**Reconcile reporting differences between the ETA 9002 and the VETS 100.** Currently, the VETS 100 shows considerably more veterans hired by Federal contractors than are reported by the public labor exchange through the ETA 9002. VETS will actively attempt to reconcile this difference.

**Coordinate with ETA on databases.** VETS will coordinate with the Employment and Training Administration in the effort to increase the number of Federal contractors who list jobs with the public employment system and to increase the number of such jobs listed. This will involve developing joint Federal contractor databases.

**Legislative changes.** Legislative changes will be sought, redefining veterans under 38 U.S.C. 4212 and covering federally-assisted construction projects under 38 U.S.C.

**Coordinate with ETA on self-help capabilities.** VETS will coordinate with ETA to ensure that veterans who are job ready have access to services and assistance through the WDS, access to electronic tools, and other self-help or less-VETS funded staff time intensive efforts.

**Strategic Performance Goals.** Achievement of this outcome goal will be measured through the following strategic performance goals:

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.1.A.** By 2005, in 100% of the States implementing WIA, the responsibilities and activities of VETS and of the Public Labor Exchange in providing One-Stop services to veterans will be effectively coordinated through the maintenance of plans and formal agreements with WIA entities, delineating the nature and scope of DVOP and LVER activities and the role of the Public Labor Exchange in providing priority and maximum services to veterans in the One-Stop Career Centers.

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.1.B.** By 2005, increase by 10% over the FY 2000 number, the number of jobs listed with the public employment service system by Federal contractors and sub-contractors.

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.1.C.** By 2005, increase, by 50%, LVER staff use of database tools necessary for identifying Federal contractors.

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.1.D.** By 2004, at least 66% of veterans who have used public labor exchange services provided by VETS funded staff will rate that assistance as either “helpful” or “very helpful.”

**Outcome Goal 2.2.** A significant number of all eligible veterans, as well as of targeted group veterans, requesting public labor exchange core services will receive successful and satisfactory job placement assistance.

**Outcome Strategy:** The strategy to achieve this outcome goal includes the following:

**Marketing to employers.** Marketing efforts aimed at employers will be improved and increased, marketing veterans as a "bottom line" asset to employers hiring them for career jobs, including the specific marketing of veterans who are on public assistance. A national marketing campaign directed at the needs of targeted veterans' groups will be designed and implemented.

**Focused services for the homeless.** Coordination will be continued with VETS Federal partners (DVA and HUD) to provide loans for qualified transitional housing facilities for homeless veterans and to provide for a seamless system of services for homeless veterans. An analysis will be conducted of how statutory changes might further strengthen the program's effectiveness, and appropriate legislative recommendation will be developed in order to positively affect the program's reauthorization.

**Coordination of WIA Section 168 and HVRP.** Efforts undertaken under the Veterans' Workforce Investment Programs authorized by section 168 of WIA, and the Homeless Veterans Rehabilitation Program efforts toward jobs for veterans who are homeless, will be coordinated so as to increase their effectiveness through a synergy of outreach, leveraged supportive services and training support.

**Provide technical assistance.** Those States failing to meet the negotiated veteran entered employment rate for VETS funded staff or for Wagner-Peyser funded systems will be provided technical assistance by VETS with the specific intent that they meet the standard within two years.

**Strategic Performance Goals.** Achievement of this outcome goal will be measured through the following strategic performance goals:

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.2.A.** By 2005, at least 30% of those veterans registering for public labor exchange services will enter employment each year through staff assisted services provided by the Wagner-Peyser funded systems.

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.2.B.** By 2005, increase the three-year rolling average of entered employment rate for registered veterans to 33% greater than that for non-veterans registered for public labor exchange services.

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.2.C.** By 2005, at least 64% of those veterans enrolled in the WIA Section 168 programs will enter employment each year through assistance provided by VETS' grantees.

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.2.D.** By 2005, at least 54% of those veterans enrolled in the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project (HVRP) will enter employment each year through assistance provided by VETS' grantees

**Outcome Goal 2.3. A significant number of veterans entering employment as a result of receiving public labor exchange core services will retain unsubsidized jobs for a meaningful**

period of time.

**Outcome Strategy.** The strategy to achieve this outcome includes the following:

**Coordinate with ETA to establish the means to report on and measure retention in**

**unemployment.** Under WIA, retention in employment is a core measure of performance for those entering employment following services from the public labor exchange system. VETS will coordinate with ETA to ensure that the overall system developed for the Department to report on and measure retention includes veterans.

**Establish a baseline for retention in employment.** Job retention at six months has not been tracked previously. The first full year that retention is tracked will form the baseline for future years.

**Promote increased use by the public labor exchange system and VETS funded staff of Federal Contractor Job Listings.** Many Federal contractor jobs are at high wage levels, which would serve to keep veterans in those jobs. VETS will actively encourage States to provide all VETS funded staff access to computers with which to access the database on Federal contractors that VETS has established and is improving.

**Establish earnings gain baseline.** VETS will explore, with ETA, the possibility of establishing a baseline for earnings gain by registered veterans that enter employment. VETS believes that there will be a direct correlation between earnings gain and retention in employment. VETS will explore with the Social Security Administration the possibility of performing special studies related to veteran groups such as targeted veterans (ETA may not track such subgroups of veterans). Social security payments will provide a good indicator of earnings.

**Market the advantages of hiring veterans to employers.** Because of their military service, veterans have proven that they have discipline and can work as part of a team. VETS intends to develop a national marketing campaign to market the advantages that hiring veterans can bring to an employer.

**Increase licensing and certification efforts for soon to separate service members and recently separated veterans.** Because, as a whole, jobs that require a license or certification are generally higher paying than many jobs that are not, VETS has made this a priority area. VETS' efforts in establishing and maintaining a national database on licensing and certification requirements that relate to the needs of service members transitioning to civilian employment have been exemplary, and now even more focus will be placed on using licensing and certification as a means for increasing veterans' wages and retention.

**Strategic Performance Goal.** Achievement of this outcome goal will be measured through the following strategic performance goal:

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.3.A.** By 2002 establish a baseline for registered veterans who enter employment following assistance by VETS funded staff who have unsubsidized jobs six months after their initial entry into employment. Based on baseline, establish a strategic performance goal for 2005 on retention.

**Outcome Goal 2.4.** A significant number of the veterans who served in a military occupation with a civilian counterpart occupation that requires a credential will receive certification or licensing for civilian employment, or will receive information about requirements for such certification and licensing and an assessment of the gaps in their required training and experience.

**Outcome Strategy.** The strategy to achieve this outcome goal includes the following:

**Interagency coordination.** VETS participates in the Interagency Taskforce on Certification and Licensing of Transitional Military Personnel, along with DVA, DOD, and representatives from 15-20 other Federal departments and agencies. In doing so, VETS coordinates with those agencies in developing information on the licensing requirements for Federal civilian employment and in creating initiatives to assist active duty personnel and veterans in acquiring such licenses.

**Certification requirements website.** A website will be developed for active duty personnel and veterans that provides information on Federal, state, and propriety certification and licensing requirements for civilian employment. For the 25 occupations with the greatest number of separating military personnel that have corresponding civilian occupations requiring a credential, the website will identify any gaps in education, training and experience that the military personnel or veteran must close before qualifying for the specific credential.

**Grants to study State licensing requirements.** VETS recently initiated a series of grants to selected states in order to fund studies of how best to assist veterans in meeting the certification and licensing requirements for certain occupations, such as health care, law enforcement, and commercial drivers.

**Increase Pilot programs and demonstration projects with business, unions, and industry groups.** In order to provide separating service members and veterans with the skills, and evidence of such skills, needed to move into civilian careers, VETS has initiated a series of pilot programs and demonstration projects that focus on matching veterans with jobs in key growth industries. These include:

**Strategic Performance Goals.** Achievement of this outcome goal will be measured through the following strategic performance goals:

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.4.A.** By 2005, increase the number of partnerships with businesses on pilot projects by at least 10 from the FY 1999 baseline of five (to a total of 15 partnerships).

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.4.B.** By 2005, double the number of veterans who graduate from VETS funded partnership pilots from a baseline established in FY 2000.

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.4.C.** By 2005, achieve a 100 % increase over the 2000 baseline

in the number of visits to the VETS website that provides information on Federal, state, and proprietary certification and licensing requirements.

**Outcome Goal 2.5. A significant number of non-job ready veterans provided assistance (including members of the military services), will receive employability development services (including case management) and other specific assistance that enhances their civilian employment prospects significantly.**

**Outcome Strategy.** The strategy to achieve this outcome goal includes the following:

**Improve case management and mediated services.** VETS will improve the case management and mediated services that are targeted to those veterans most in need by focusing on: early identification of employment barriers, providing vocational guidance and employability development services, job development and selective placement, follow-ups after placement, and increasing the outcomes and performance levels expected of grantees. New monitoring procedures and staff training will be developed for VETS staff, focusing on core, mediated, and intensive services provided to veterans in the One-Stop service delivery systems.

Assessment, case management and follow-up will be emphasized. For self-service veteran customers and those veterans receiving assistance that is not allowed to be reported via the current reporting system, procedures will be developed to capture lost information/data. Coordination with ETA on the development and implementation of performance measures under WIA will be a priority, in order to develop reporting mechanisms that will capture information on targeted groups of veterans that is not currently available.

**Increase TAP attendance.** In order to maximize the extent to which job-readiness assistance is provided to those who are transitioning to civilian employment, an effort will be made to increase attendance at Transition Assistance Program workshops by service members and their spouses. Steps to accomplish this will include: working in coordination with DOD and DVA to increase the targeted marketing efforts; supporting a legislative change that would allow TAP participants to attend TAP up to one year prior to separation, and that will allow the provision of DVOP/LVER services to service members within 30 days of separation. Pilots will be conducted to determine how best to conduct TAP overseas and an assessment made of the effectiveness of those workshops. Sufficient resources will be sought to enable a reduction in TAP class sizes.

**Increase spouse attendance at TAP workshops.** A specific effort will be made to target spouses of transitioning service members for attendance at TAP workshops by: identifying existing barriers to their attendance and developing plans to remove those barriers; adding more spouse-related guidance to TAP workshop materials; and seeking Womens' Bureau assistance in future redesigns of TAP workshops so that the needs of female spouses can be better addressed.

**Continually assess the quality of TAP information.** TAP workbook materials and presentations will be continually assessed so as to ensure that they provide the most useful and up-to-date information. Tailored or specialized TAP courses for different groups (Senior Executives, retirees, spouses) will be piloted (depending upon resource availability).

**Priority assistance at the ES.** Legislation will be sought that would allow TAP participants to be registered with the Employment Service as veterans, which would allow better tracking and access to priority assistance.

**Implement a TAP customer satisfaction survey.** A customer satisfaction survey will be developed and implemented, and the information generated by the survey will be used to help identify TAP strengths and weaknesses and to enhance the quality of the program.

**Assess TAP impact.** Systems and tools will be developed to measure the impact of TAP workshops on the services delivered by VETS' service delivery systems, such as by capturing data in the States on services provided to TAP graduates during the 180 days following separation from the military. Methods will be developed to coordinate the tracking of TAP graduates' use of VETS' delivery systems' employment and training services when these graduates use those services in a State other than where s/he attended the TAP workshop.

**Targeted marketing campaign.** A marketing campaign will be directed at employers in specific industries experiencing labor shortages, to inform them of the technical skills and other traits that make transitioning service members desirable employees. The campaign will be regionally specific, rather than national, to target specific veterans skills to localized employer needs.

**Coordinate with the Department of Defense and the military services.** The priority and emphases that TAP has received from DOD and the military commands over the years has constantly changed. For VETS, this occasionally has affected the ability to access service members eligible for TAP. VETS will coordinate closely with DOD and the military to keep TAP a priority program. VETS plans to update existing written agreements with DOD and the military services that will reflect the importance of TAP.

**Strategic Performance Goals.** Achievement of this outcome goal will be measured through the following strategic performance goals:

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.5.A.** By 2005, provide staff-oriented services to include case management for 70% of those veterans (registered or enrolled in one of VETS' service delivery systems) who are identified as being among targeted veterans groups or others with employment barriers as being most in need of intensive, individualized services in order to prepare them for suitable employment opportunities, and who agree to the case management plan.

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.5.B.** By 2005, at least 80% of service members who attended TAP workshops give an overall rating of either "helpful" or "very helpful" to the job search assistance provided.

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.5.C.** By 2005, provide TAP workshops to 64% of service

members separating from the service in the Continental United States (CONUS).

**Outcome Goal 2.6. Assist veterans, reservists, and National Guard members to understand and apply their rights under Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Veterans' Preference (VP), resolving complaint cases expeditiously while maintaining quality case handling procedures.**

**Outcome Strategy.** The strategy to achieve this outcome goal includes the following:

**Conduct quality assurance reviews.** In order to ensure that USERRA and VP cases are being resolved in an effective manner, VETS will conduct quality assurance reviews on a sampling of such cases in order to determine if they are being processed in accordance with established law and procedures. An important part of these reviews will be to determine the degree to which all of the relevant issues in each case are being correctly identified, the degree to which investigative procedures are followed correctly, and the degree to which the required documentation is being filed or recorded.

**Monitor implementation of timeliness guidelines.** VETS will monitor the implementation of its timeliness guidelines to ensure that investigators complete their actions in a timely manner and that cases, in turn, are resolved within established time frames.

**Coordinate with OPM, OSC, and MSPB on implementing new Veterans' Preference provisions.** Under a new initiative, VETS will work with the Office of Personnel Management, the Office of Special Counsel, and the Merit System Protection Board to develop investigative procedures and referral processes

**Proactively implement new Veterans Preference provisions.** VETS anticipates a possible rise in the number of alleged violations of VP laws and regulations due to the increasing demand for a limited number of Federal jobs. For this reason, VETS has recently worked with the NVTI to develop a training course for all VETS investigative field staff who handle VP complaint cases. Also, a baseline will be established from which performance standards for compliance will be developed for future years.

**Interagency coordination.** VETS activities in the implementation of USERRA will be coordinated with DOD. A public information campaign will be developed in order to increase awareness of and encourage compliance with USERRA, along with development of a plan to increase coverage in media outlets not previously using the agency as a news source.

**USERRA Investigations.** Guidance will be developed on handling discrimination cases, and training will be provided to VETS staff on use of the guidance in meeting the anti-discrimination provisions of USERRA.

**Veterans' Preference awareness.** In an effort to decrease the number of VP complaints filed

against Federal agencies, a initiative will be launched to increase veterans' and Federal agency awareness of the new law and Federal veterans preference. A baseline will be established, from which will be measured the number of cases filed because of lack of understanding or misapplication of the law.

**Pension plan administrator marketing.** Informational materials will be developed and distributed to employers and pension plan administrators, increasing their awareness of their responsibilities to protect pension rights of veterans and reserve component members. A core cadre of VETS staff will be trained to be experts in pension case resolution.

**Strategic Performance Goals.** The achievement of this outcome goal will be measured through the following strategic performance goals:

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.6.A.** By 2005, handle at least 94% of USERRA cases in an effective manner as defined by procedural guidelines.

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.6.B.** Through 2005, continue to resolve 85% of USERRA cases within 90 days of their filing dates; resolve 90% of USERRA cases within 120 days of their filing dates; resolve 95% of USERRA cases within one year of their filing dates.

**Strategic Performance Goal 2.6.C.** By the end of 2000, develop a baseline for measuring VP case activity. This base line will be used to develop performance goals for FY 2001-2005.

## SECTION 5.

### **Relationship Between the Annual Performance Plan and the Strategic Plan**

The broad goals set forth in this Strategic Plan for each aspect of the agency mission establish the parameters for specific goals and objectives to be included in each annual agency performance plan. Specific, measurable objectives will be included in the Assistant Secretary's Annual Performance Agreement(s) with the Secretary; appropriate objectives related to those goals will be included in managers' individual performance plans, and when applicable, in agreements with VETS' service providers. In all cases, whether the goals/objectives are stated in terms of outcomes or the results of outputs, they will be measurable and used for accountability purposes. In addition, the VETS' budget request is integrated into the Strategic Plan and enables, assuming reasonable increases in resources when requested, achievement of the goals and outcomes identified.

The accomplishment of Annual Performance Plan objectives will be tracked on a monthly or quarterly basis through the newly established VETS' Operations and Programs Activity Report (VOPAR) along with issues or factors that are deterring or have the effect of deferring accomplishment of objectives. The reliability of information used in the Annual Performance and Strategic Plans, when compiled by VETS, will be established through local visits and a Management Control Review system.

## **SECTION 6.**

### **Consultation with Stakeholders**

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VETS' stakeholders are active members of the armed forces of the United States and their families, veterans and their families, reservists and National Guardsmen and their families, State and local government agencies who provide labor exchange services, and public and private organizations that receive grants for training veterans and provide services to homeless veterans. Other stakeholders include veterans service organizations such as the VFW, the American Legion, DAV, AMVETS, and many others, employers, the NVTI, and other government departments and agencies that provide services to veterans with which VETS has an ongoing relationship-DOD, HUD, DVA, DOJ, OPM and Office of Special Counsel, and the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees. The internal stakeholders are ETA, SOL, and OFCCP.

VETS held a Strategic Plan conference with its staff and many stakeholders in March, 1998, to obtain their input on development and refinement of the Strategic Plan. Throughout 1998, there was close coordination with the Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies (ICESA) to obtain their input. This included a special survey of SESA Administrators, LESO managers, DVOPs/LVERs, and VETS staff that affirmatively tested the viability of performance measurement for many of VETS' performance goals.

The agency has been conducting pilot projects in six states to test various methods of providing priority to veterans for services in the evolving public workforce development system, and related means of measuring outcomes achieved for veterans. The pilots are in line with a stakeholder forum with veterans' service organizations and ICESA that begin a process for defining "priority of service" in a rapidly changing employment and training environment. An outside contractor has been hired to evaluate the pilot.

The agency is partnered with the USDOL Employment and Training Administration (ETA) in its stakeholder consultation process for the workforce development system, and also is included in the Workforce Development Performance Measures initiative sponsored by the ETA. That initiative involves input from a broad spectrum of VETS' stakeholders. Stakeholders input also continues to be sought from federal agency partners, DOL partners, State agencies and grantees, and Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs).

VETS will provide its draft strategic plan on the Internet and provide copies of the plan to VSOs, DVA, HUD, OPM, DOD components, DOJ, and within DOL to ETA, OFCCP, BLS, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs (OCIA), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM), and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy (ASP).

## SECTION 7. Cross-Cutting Coordination

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This section highlights VETS' efforts to establish and maintain links between agencies -- both within and beyond the Department -- that administer similar or complementary programs. VETS places a high priority on ensuring that it operates its programs in a coordinated, efficient, and effective way. VETS' effort in this sphere is one key to accomplishing its strategic goals, the goals of its many partners, and mitigating the key external factors discussed earlier.

One important VETS objective is to ensure that its cross-cutting coordination efforts lead to program goals that are complementary, not redundant. This is accomplished through agency collaboration which helps to identify issues and problems that must be addressed and leads to the development of mutual strategies for attaining goals and to identifying appropriate measures that can be effectively used to gauge program success.

### WIA

VETS coordinate closely with ETA and the States on implementation of the Workforce Investment Act to ensure that veteran specific requirements are carried out in full, and are consistent with the mandates of title 38. VETS is an active participant in the *Workforce Development Performance Measurement Initiative* and the *Workforce Development Performance Measurement Group*, which were instituted by DOL to measure system-wide outcomes of all related employment and training programs, to focus resources on results, and to simplify reporting requirements. Through these initiatives, VETS is coordinating with other participants such as State and local partners, the Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS), Education (ED), and Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The initiatives provide a stakeholder forum for discussing performance measures and related policy issues as they apply to complimentary programs and the most efficient and effective use of resources.

This coordination supports Outcome Goals 1.1 through 1.5, and 2.1 through 2.6

### One-Stop

## **Career Centers**

A cornerstone of DOL's, VETS', and their State partners' efforts in WDS improvements in line with implementation of the WIA is the establishment of a One-Stop Career Center system that provides job seekers and employers with access to all federal, state and local resources related to workforce development. DOL will simplify and consolidate grant planning and reporting and extend available statutory and regulatory waivers as requested by states to improve the delivery of comprehensive services to customers by working with other federal agencies with complementary programs, including HHS, HUD, ED and Department of Transportation (DOT). VETS is coordinating with ETA in the implementation of WIA, including the development of State agreements, in this major change to the national employment and training system.

This coordination supports Outcome Goals 1.1 through 1.3, and 2.1 through 2.5

## **Certification & Licensing**

VETS plays a leadership role within the Federal Interagency Task Force on Certification and Licensing of Transitioning Military Personnel, and with numerous other federal agencies, as well as States and private sector employers for the purpose of advancing the interests of transitioning military personnel. On the state level, VETS works with 5 States (Colorado, Ohio, Maryland, Georgia and South Carolina) that are participating in a pilot program to find ways to alleviate credentialing barriers faced by transitioning military personnel and veterans. With the private sector, VETS is actively involved with the Communication Workers of America and the Microsoft Corporation in projects to help transitioning military personnel translate their military training and experience into high technology jobs.

This coordination supports Outcome Goals 1.1 through 1.3, and 2.4.

## **TAP**

VETS closely coordinates with the DVA and Defense in DOL's employment and training programs for veterans and soon-to-be-separated service members and their spouses and families. This Transition Assistance program operates on 178 military bases across the country. Specific areas of coordination and cooperation are spelled out in a formal agreement and are implemented at the local military base level. For instance, DOL/VETS provides the instructors for much of the typical three-day training, DOD provides meeting space and

makes logistical arrangements, and the DVA provides specific assistance to service members who have service-incurred disabilities.

This coordination supports Outcome Goal 2.5.

## **HVRP**

Under the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project (HVRP), the VETS and the Department coordinate closely with HUD and DVA to refer veterans who are homeless and in need of substance abuse assistance. Once stabilized, these veterans are referred back to the DOL programs for job finding assistance. This supports the goal to assist 15,000 homeless veterans enter employment and move out of homeless status by FY 2004.

This coordination supports Outcome Goals 2.2 & 2.5.

## **Enforcement Responsibilities**

In carrying out Federal compliance and enforcement responsibilities, such as those related to:

USERRA

Federal veterans' preference rights

Federal contractor reporting responsibilities for special disabled, Vietnam era veterans and others

Federal contractor job listing (FCJL) responsibilities,

VETS coordinates with other DOL agencies such as OFCCP, ETA, and SOL, and with outside agencies such as OPM and the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Each initiative to coordinate with other agencies is designed to leverage resources, reduce overlapping activity, and utilize the strengths of each entity in providing direct services or in collecting and disseminating key information.

This coordination supports Outcome Goal 2.6.

## **Veterans' Preference**

VETS also coordinates with OPM to increase veterans' and Federal agency awareness as to Federal Veterans' Preference Rights and thus decrease the number of these complaints filed against Federal agencies.

This coordination supports Outcome Goal 2.6.

## **Affirmative Action**

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) works with DOJ's Office of Special Counsel (OSC) and VETS to enforce the affirmative

action responsibilities and reporting requirements of Federal contractors related to special disabled and Vietnam era veterans.

This coordination supports Outcome Goal 2.1.

## **SBREFA**

In accordance with the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA), the Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) provides one-stop service as a clearinghouse for DOL compliance assistance information, inquiries and comments on enforcement activity. OSBP serves a cross-cutting function by coordinating with all of the DOL enforcement agencies, including VETS, on customer/stakeholder feedback to resolve problems and improve agency operations.

This coordination supports Outcome Goal 2.6.

## **LMRDA**

VETS, as does every enforcement agency within DOL, maintains close ties and shares information with other law enforcement agencies. In Labor Management Relations Disclosures Act (LMRDA) criminal enforcement matters, cooperation may extend, as appropriate, to participation in joint investigations with other federal agencies, such as the DOJ and OSC.

This coordination supports Outcome Goal 2.6.

## SECTION 8. Program Evaluations

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### Internal Evaluations

VETS has completed several significant studies in recent years that have guided its strategic and annual performance planning activities, including:

**Assessing TAP.** From 1998-2000, VETS has conducted a major contractual effort on TAP with a two-pronged approach: evaluate the impact of the TAP program and, through focus groups, gain insights from TAP participants on ways to improve the TAP program design, and make it more accessible on military bases.

This ongoing evaluation will help assess VETS effectiveness in achieving the desired results under Outcome Goal 2.5 beyond those directly measurable by the specified Strategic Performance Goals.

**Testing output and outcome measures.** VETS authorized 6 pilot states in 1997 to test an array of output and outcome measures that are different from the quantitative measures that have been standardized in the Job Service system for more than a decade. The utility, feasibility and costs of the various measures are being evaluated and a report with recommendations will be submitted for consideration.

**Assessing the impact of WIA.** In March 1998, VETS conducted a national conference on the VETS Strategic Plan. VETS staff, along with stakeholders (VSOs, employers, other federal agencies, congressional staff), analyzed performance goals and measures, and the strategies to achieve them. Recommendations were made to and accepted by the ASVET. Significant strategies that came out of this conference dealt with WIA implementation, DVOP/LVER integration into the One-Stop system, and expanding TAP overseas. These recommended strategies were used in the development of this Strategic Plan.

In May 1999, VETS convened a WIA in-process review conference to examine lessons learned from early implementation states on ways to best integrate veterans services into state and local workforce development systems. Participants included VETS staff in affected states, state WIA

staff, and ETA staff. Recommendations for other implementation efforts have been made, and will be disseminated by the ASVET.

## **External Evaluations**

**The General Accounting Office** has surveyed, reviewed or evaluated the following VETS program activities:

- Federal Contractor Program (1994)
- Veterans' Employment and Training Service: Focusing on Program Results to Improve Agency Performance (05/07/97)
- Survey of the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, Local Veterans' Employment Representative program (1997)
- Veterans' Employment and Training: Services Provided by Labor Department Programs (1998)
- Homeless Veterans Programs (1998)

## **Future Plans**

VETS expects to conduct customer satisfaction surveys and other appropriate studies beginning in FY2002 similar to those mentioned above to assess the value that its customers place upon the services offered by the agency and its grantees. Such special studies will also be necessary to measure the degree to which we fulfill promises set forth in our Customer Service Standards that cannot be measured using routine reporting systems. Focus group sites have been selected in 8 States.

These surveys are part of the measurement for Outcome Goals 1.3 & 2.1.

Implementation of GPRA will require new methods to measure the results-based outcomes contained in this Strategic Plan. VETS is actively identifying the most cost effective and efficient ways to achieve this. While the customer satisfaction surveys will build upon earlier efforts as described above, a new customer service plan will be developed in FY 2001, so that pilot tests can be done the subsequent year with the survey published in 2003 (depending upon resource availability).

This effort will help VETS define additional or improved measures of performance under Outcome Goals 1.3 & 2.1, particularly as they relate to more precise measures of outcomes.

The number of unemployed veterans registered for services with the public employment service system invariably reflects, and cross-walks to, the unemployment data compiled by the BLS and Census. Because of this, VETS will try to obtain supplementary information from BLS and Census data that would be used to verify its meeting of strategic goals and enable better evaluation of program activity for the next decade. For example, VETS has established goals for reducing the unemployment of certain veteran subgroups with unemployment rates higher than the rest of the population.

This effort will help VETS assess effectiveness in achieving the desired results under Outcome Goal 2.5.

To address the issue of job stability or advancement over time, VETS will investigate more efficient ways of collecting baseline data and measuring results over time. By FY 2000, the means to obtain this information, whether through a survey or other approach, should be in place to provide the longitudinal information sought. VETS will initiate an effort to work with the Social Security Administration to track and compare the wage records of veterans who have received certain services versus control groups that have not; TAP participants versus non-TAP participants could also be compared. This mechanism may be particularly helpful in gaining a cost effective indication on wage increases and retention in employment. We also expect to cooperate with ETA in the design of longitudinal studies on WIA participants and press for the inclusion of statistically valid groups of veterans. Such studies would also provide us valuable wage and retention information.

The Social Security Administration evaluation would help VETS define additional or improved measures of performance under Outcome Goals 1.3 & 2.5.

## **Schedule of VETS' Program Evaluations**

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VETS relies heavily on a program evaluation system, scheduled with evaluations on a recurring basis to continuously monitor the performance of its program functions, and to enable identification of factors, issues or problems that have an impact on securing maximum employment and training opportunities for veterans. This system includes the following program evaluation efforts:

### **Public Employment Service System**

#### **Annual:**

Annual Local Employment Service Office (LESO) review  
Review of each SESA Measures of Performance of Veteran Services  
Analysis of each SESA Measures of Performance of Veteran Services  
Review of Final VETS 300, ETA-9002, and VETS 200 fiscal and program reports  
Analysis of Final VETS 300, ETA-9002 and VETS 200 reports  
Review of Fiscal Year grant modification requests

#### WIA Section 168 (formerly JTPA IV-C)

Annual Post-Award Review with Grant Officer Technical Representative.  
Annual on-site reviews of grantees, and periodic technical assistance visits.

#### HVRP

Annual Post-Award Review with Grant Officer Technical Representative.  
Annual on-site reviews of grantees, and periodic technical assistance visits.

#### TAP

Annual on-site evaluations of each site.

#### USERRA

Annual Quality Assurance Review (based on sample cases from each region).

#### VR&E

Annual Program Lead national cumulative VR&E activity roll up evaluation.

#### **Quarterly:**

Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) VR&E activity report to the local office manager (individual office report)

Director for Veterans' Employment and Training (DVET) report to Regional Administrator for Veterans' Employment and Training (RAVET) (state report)  
RAVET VR&E activity report to VETS National Office program lead (regional report)  
Program Lead cumulative VR&E activity evaluation. (national roll up)

## **Veterans' Employment and Training Service**

### **Annual:**

Annual Report to Congress

### **Quarterly:**

VETS' Operations and Programs Activity Report (On all activities) to the Department.

### **Monthly:**

VETS' Operations and Programs Activity Report (On all activities) to ASVET.

### **Future Evaluations Under WIA**

Title 38 requires that performance standards be established to ensure that States are providing maximum employment and training opportunities to eligible veterans. Each year, the law requires that the Secretary of Labor report to Congress on the success of the SESAs in meeting the needs of eligible veterans. It further requires that this report contain a comparison of the job placement rate for each category of veteran (eligible veterans and persons, Vietnam era, disabled, special disabled) and age group with the job placement rate for non-veterans.

VETS is coordinating closely with ETA to assist the Secretary of Labor in the ongoing development of performance measures and data reporting systems that are consistent with the implementation of the new WIA and with Title 38. Efforts, including contractual efforts, are underway to revise methods, processes and selection of criteria for establishing prototype State agency measures of performance. These measures of performance will be woven into the evaluation guidance for VETS staff that conduct local office reviews. This

guidance will also deal with important considerations that VETS faces in working in the evolving employment and training environment under WIA. Old givens, such as “intrinsic management structure” and “local employment service” will have to be redefined as states develop innovative delivery systems. VETS will also be exploring, with ETA, new ways to sanction poor performers in order to put teeth into the needed accountability in order to meet performance goals.

The prototype state performance standards and measures will stress outcomes, and important outputs. The outcome measures that VETS is considering relate to: 1) Entered Employment Rate; 2) Annual Earnings Gain; 3) Employment Retention; and 4) Customer Satisfaction. These standards will directly support key VETS Strategic Plan goals and strategies to achieve goals. Emphasis will be placed on the most in need, targeted groups of veterans.

Output, or process, measures being considered include: 1) Number of Veterans Placed in Training; 2) Number of Veterans Counseled; and 3) Number of Veterans Receiving some Reportable Service. These outputs directly relate to the outcomes expressed above. VETS will investigate possible joint evaluation strategies with ETA where feasible and cost efficient.

## **VOPAR**

VETS has instituted a management reporting process, the VETS’ Operations and Programs Activity Report (VOPAR), that provides periodic updates related to the achievement of Annual Performance Plan goals. It breaks goal attainment down to regional and state levels and identifies issues that detract from achievement of goals and objectives, and strategies that VETS managers utilize to deal with such issues. The VOPAR is shared on a regular basis with the Deputy Secretary and key stakeholders.

## **Management Control Reviews**

VETS has developed and implemented a Management Control Review process that periodically assesses the effectiveness of agency organization, policies and procedures in meeting their Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan goals. The Management Control Review process also determines whether programs and resources are protected from waste, fraud and abuse and mismanagement, and whether reliable and timely information is obtained and used for decision-making. If issues are found to exist, detailed plans for corrective action are developed and tracked until completed.



## SECTION 9. Data Capacity

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### Key Data Collections

#### VETS key data collections activities:

VETS will use the ETA 9002, an OMB approved information collection, to collect data on the number of registrants for services and their entered employment rates as it relates to priority of service goals relative to special disabled, disabled, and veterans and eligible persons. This data is validated through local on site evaluation visits (Title 38, United States Code requires VETS to conduct on-site evaluations of local offices from which public employment services are offered), and the adequacy of the reviews validated through Management Accountability Reviews. The ETA 9002 will also provide data on case management, counseling, referrals to training and other statutorily mandated reporting requirements. Should there be changes in the ETA 9002 or should it be discontinued, as is anticipated, VETS will coordinate closely with ETA and the ICESA to determine alternative ways to obtain the necessary performance and outcome information.

VETS uses its own field staff to gather data on the number of servicemembers that attend TAP workshops. The information is gathered at the military bases and forwarded by our Directors of Veterans' Employment and Training to our Regional, and then National offices. The information will be validated through the Management Control Review system.

USERRA data is collected from federal staff through an automated data base system the USERRA Information Management System (USERRA IMS), and validated by the USERRA Regional Lead Center through accountability reviews.

### New Reporting Instrument

VETS has identified areas where software reprogramming is necessary to ensure baseline data will be available from SESAs, such as average wage upon entering employment. This is intended to be a one-time effort. The new reporting instrument will need to undergo clearances, up to and including OMB information collection approval. VETS is also placing reliance on the results of the Census 2000, and its enumeration of veterans. This will provide

more accurate data on the status of veterans and permit detailed analysis. From this analysis program initiatives and plans may be modified based on the new information on veterans' employment and economic conditions.

## **Data Measures and Data Validation Systems**

VETS will use data from SESAs, collected as part of an OMB-approved information collection to measure progress for the DVOP and LVER programs. In addition, VETS will conduct local employment service office (LESO) evaluations at the existing LESOs and One-Stop-Career-Centers and validate data on veteran services provided (as submitted by the SESAs) through on-site LESO evaluations and checking quarterly LVER reports. Data is provided to DVETs on a quarterly basis. DVETs verify and validate the data and forward it to RAVETs using the DLIMS. Progress is monitored by Regions by the ASVET from the VOPAR. The growth of local offices in the WIA One-Stop system presents a growing challenge for VETS to stretch its resources to monitor all local offices.

The key system in validating each States' reported data is established by the State itself, which conducts its own validation process and then certifies via signed documentation to VETS that all data collected and reported by that State is valid and accurate. The validity of data will be further by VETS' staff as part of the Management Control Review process.

WIA Section 168 programs (formerly JTPA IV-C) and Homeless Veterans' program goals and performance are measured through grantee plans (submitted with their application) and the grantees' quarterly reports noting their own progress against their plans. This information is validated by our field staff (GOTR and staff) through on-site reviews, and significant departures from plans are tracked in the VOPAR and corrective action is sought from the grantee.

VETS obtains data on VR&E clients from LVER quarterly narrative reports, and these are verified by the DVET, forwarded to the Regions for aggregation, and then forwarded to OASVET for compilation. The data is then checked against DVA data on a quarterly basis. Progress on achievement of goals related to VR&E clients is monitored through the VOPAR.

VETS is reviewing existing and developing information flows which support performance measures to assess their internal controls and the quality of their data. The review of information flows and data capacity is targeted to be completed by April 2000. The results of this review will be used to guide system improvements where needed, to find methods for collecting information not currently collected, and, if needed, to develop additional steps to safeguard the validity and reliability of data used in performance reporting.

## **Unavailable Data**

A note of clarification regarding VETS' work: Efforts related to VETS' mission make available services that can enhance employment opportunities and economic security for the 15 million veterans in the civilian labor force. However, it should be noted in any discussion of data capacity that, although VETS' broad impact extends well beyond the services provided by (and reported by) the public employment service system and the efforts of Disabled Veterans Outreach Program and Local Veterans Employment Representative staffs, attempts to identify various performance attributes of many of these other activities -- such as to identify federal contractors and subcontractors; the range of activities in the Transition Assistance Program; marketing to employers; ensuring that veterans' preference is given for federal jobs; and facilitating use of knowledge, skills and abilities of separating service members in the civilian labor market -- unfortunately do not currently show up in traditional Departmental information collections. Thus VETS will continue to seek ways to collect the wide range of relevant performance data not currently collected, which would enable the Agency to present increased information in the future which would reflect more accurately the broader and deeper scope of its work on behalf of veterans. (For example, VETS is seeking valid and reliable means of obtaining wage information, having requested funding to work with BLS to obtain this information through surveys.) As part of the review of information flows and data capacity described above, VETS will determine additional methods to collect information to be used in measuring performance.

## **SECTION 10.**

### **Major Management Challenges**

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VETS faces several major management challenges over the next several years. These management challenges include the following:

#### **WIA Requirements**

VETS managers must deal with the new requirements of WIA implementation, which mandate significant changes impacting the way they do business. The traditional service delivery model of Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVERs) staff working in local offices that look the same across the country will change, as states experiment with and develop alternative delivery models and make increasing use of electronic tools. The challenge for VETS is to have the ability to change while still meeting the intent of Congress for veteran services and outcomes, as expressed in applicable chapters of Title 38, U.S.C. To meet this challenge, VETS has instituted a process of constant communication among DVETs regarding WIA developments in States, and actively encourages the sharing and use of "best practices" regarding services to veterans. VETS also sends out a regular update to all staff regarding WIA implementation, and stresses to its managers the need for proactive involvement at the State level.

#### **DVOP/LVER Resources Management**

Services are delivered to veterans mainly through DVOP and LVER staff located in SESA local offices nationwide. Because of budgetary constraints and the expansion of WIA One-Stop service delivery locations, coverage of delivery points in the system will fall short of what is needed. Targeted veterans thus not served will impair achievement of the major employment and training strategic goals of the agency. The issue of DVOP/LVER access to Internet tools needs to be surfaced and discussed and recommendations made to assure that funds and equipment are made available. The achievement of outcomes and impacts related to veteran subgroups relies heavily on the availability of training funds to upgrade skills and knowledge or to provide new career paths, meaning that decreases in either DOL or DVA resources for the

training programs available to these veteran subgroups would affect negatively the performance results that VETS plans.

**DVOP/LVER  
Turnover  
Implications**

The consistently high turnover rates experienced among DVOP/LVER staff also creates management planning challenges in staffing allocations and workload coverage, as well as defining a significant ongoing training need. This level of training need as a result of staff turnover supports a corollary need for NVTI to continue to operate at or even above its historical level of effort in course delivery and development annually.

**Services  
Not  
Reported**

The current planning by the public employment service system requires registration only for those individuals receiving mediated and training services, meaning that many labor exchange activities by our customers (such as through self-help via electronic systems) are not currently captured in data which reports States' assistance to veterans seeking employment and training services. Indications are that self-help systems aid job assist job-ready veterans in finding gainful employment. In dealing with this issue, VETS will continue to identify cost-effective methods to determine the degree that these systems are assisting job-ready veterans.

**High  
Unemployment**

Unemployment among servicemembers transitioning into the civilian labor force for the first time is almost twice the national veterans' average, which present new challenges for Agency management. VETS regards this problem as a significant opportunity to develop a targeted marketing campaign that will be directed at this group of veterans and employers in specific industries currently experiencing worker shortages (telecommunications, information technology). This will help new veterans learn how to market the quality skills acquired during their military service (using many of the facilities provided under the Workforce Investment Act) and inform employers that these veterans possess both the technical expertise and sociological traits (promptness, dependability, teamwork, leadership) that would make them valuable additions to any organization. The marketing campaign would be

regionally specific rather than generically national in scope. This would enable targeting specific veteran skills to localized employer needs. It would be coordinated by VETS national office Federal staff.

## **USERRA Caseload**

USERRA caseload decline is anticipated due to extensive education efforts aimed at employers and service members on their rights and responsibilities. Unfortunately, cases that remain open tend to be the more difficult cases, such as those involved with pension issues or Federal employment and reemployment, which can involve multiple agencies for resolution

## **Financial Management**

VETS is continuing its efforts to identify all potential internal control management weaknesses or high risk areas. VETS plans to continue its renewed management control effort that started in FY 1998. It will assess management weaknesses, high-risk areas (particularly as it relates to fraud and abuse) and perform follow-up evaluations to make sure recommendations were implemented. The management control effort will be a continuous effort.

VETS will continue to seek training opportunities for its executive staff and regional and field managers regarding financial management, management controls, and cost issues. In addition, training will be sought for employees currently responsible for financial and budget management.

## **Human Resources Management**

VETS had to reduce its staffing below its downsizing plan and reorganize its national office and operational entities to shift operational work to the Regional level. This enabled the agency to shift expertise and skills needed to perform the work through reassignments, new hires and some promotions. This necessitates a heavy training investment by VETS over the next two years. The agency requires capacity building at all levels to be able to accomplish its goals. To support outcome cost-based allocations and comply with other statutory financial requirements, VETS will establish a working committee with field staff to determine how to allocate costs and train regional and field office staff on cost allocation.

## **Diversifying VETS' Workforce**

VETS will use hiring and promotion opportunities to balance its workforce and achieve a diversified workforce. VETS is fully using staffing opportunities such as welfare to work, Hispanic American Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) interns, summer employment, DVA work aides, and Veterans' Readjustment Act (VRA) appointments to diversify its workforce. VETS has made some significant achievements in this regard, and the agency is now working effectively to resolve the only problem area where gains can still be made — female hiring. Capacity building efforts and our recent reorganization, combined with automation is presenting some opportunity for promoting female employees into the professional ranks. The agency has also effectively recruited female veterans for positions in the field which have residency and veterans status requirements (statutory requirements).

## SECTION 11. Conclusion

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### Looking to the Future

VETS remains committed to providing the best possible services to those veteran groups who most need assistance (such as those whose unemployment rates remain higher than the national average), and to those needing more structured assistance (such as case management services and skills training). Educating employers and protected individuals about their respective obligations and rights under various statutes is an effective approach in preventing violations of employment and reemployment rights, and VETS plans more of this educational efforts in the future.

In responding to the challenges VETS currently faces, such as a new labor exchange system under WIA and changing labor market conditions, the Agency must find new approaches, improve its efficiency, and leverage the resources that are dedicated to veterans employment and training in this country. VETS' two strategic goals establish a solid blueprint for making significant progress. By engaging all stakeholders in the mission of the Agency, and obtaining the highest level of public confidence in the development and delivery of VETS services, real progress will be possible. Implementing a strategic plan that reflects the involvement of Agency staff and outside stakeholders, including Congress, is an important step toward that progress.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADVET	Assistant Director for Veterans' Employment and Training
AJB	America's Job Bank
AMVETS	American Veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam
ASP	Assistant Secretary for Policy (Office of the)
ASVET	Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training
ATB	America's Talent Bank
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLS	Bureau of Labor Statistics
CCH	Commerce Clearing House
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CFS	Consolidated Financial Statement
CLF	Civilian Labor Force
CPS	Civilian Population Survey
CRC	Civil Rights Center
CWA	Communications Workers of America
CY	Calendar Year
DASVET	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training
DAV	Disabled American Veterans
DLIMS	DVOP/LVER Information Management System
DOD	Department of Defense
DOI	Department of Interior
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOL	Department of Labor
DOT	Department of Transportation
DVA	Department of Veterans' Affairs
DVET	Director for Veterans' Employment and Training
DVOP	Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program
ED	Department of Education
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
EOC	Equal Opportunity Council
ES	Employment Service
ESA	Employment Standards Administration
ETA	Employment and Training Administration
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCJL	Federal Contractor Job Listing

FCP	Federal Contractor Program
FECA	Federal Employees' Compensation Act
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	General Accounting Office
GOTR	Grant Officer Technical Representative
GPRA	Government Performance Results Act
HACU	Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
HVRP	Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project
ICESA	Interstate Conference of Employment Security Administrators
ILAB	International Labor Affairs Bureau
IMS	Information Management System
IPMA	International Personnel Management Association
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
IT	Information Technology
JTPA IV-C	Job Training Partnership Act, Title IV-C
LESO	Local Employment Service Office
LMRDA	Labor Management Relations Disclosures Act
LVER	Local Veterans' Employment Representative
MIS	Information Management System
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSPB	Merit Systems Protection Board
NCESGR	National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve
NPR	National Performance Review
NVTI	National Veterans' Training Institute
OASAM	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management
OASVET	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training
OCIA	Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs
OCR	Office of Civil Rights (DOL)
OFCCP	Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
O*NET	Occupational Information Network
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
OSC	Office of Special Counsel
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
OSBP	Office of Small Business Programs
PC	Personal Computer

PL	Public Law
PRO-VET	Providing Reemployment Opportunities for Veterans
PY	Program Year
RAVET	Regional Administrator for Veterans' Employment and Training
RIF	Reduction in Force
SBA	Small Business Administration
SBREFA	Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act
SDP	Service Delivery Point
SESA	State Employment Security Agency
SIC	Standard Industrial Codes
SOL	Solicitor of Labor
TAP	Transition Assistance Program
UCX	Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service members
UI	Unemployment Insurance
U.S.C.	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
USERRA	Uniformed Services' Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
USPS	United States Postal Service
VAC	Veterans' Affairs Committee (House & Senate)
VETS	Veterans' Employment and Training Service
VEV	Vietnam-era Veterans
VFW	Veterans of Foreign Wars
VOPAR	VETS Operations and Programs Activity Report
VRA	Veterans' Readjustment Assistance
VR&E	Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment
VSO	Veterans' Service Organization
WB	Women's Bureau
WDS	Workforce Development System
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WOTC	Work Opportunity Tax Credit
WtW	Welfare-to-Work

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In conformance with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, (GPRA), The Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), submits this strategic plan which provides a five year overview of the proposed outcomes and results of the agency's goals. VETS acknowledges the technical assistance provided by Federal Data Corporation through a contract with the Department's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management. VETS, however, is solely responsible for the development of the plan and through its grantees and partners is accountable for the successful implementation of its goals. Through this consultation draft, we seek to engage Congress, the principal architect of GPRA, and other stakeholders in our ongoing consultative process.